



Dissecting the Conceptual Cleavages between Military Leadership and Command and Control

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ABSTRACT

Military Leadership (ML) and Command and Control (C2) are very topical concepts that have attracted scholarly attentions in the defence and security sector (Chester, 1938; Maxwell, 1977; Gardner, 1987; Regan, 1998; Moraski, 2001; Leonard, 2003; Davis and Richard, 2006; Kendra, 2008; Warren, 2009; Robert et al, 2010; Muhammed and Anes, 2013; and Keller, 2014). Obviously, many of these scholars have treated the concepts separately with a very little attempt to jointly interrogate their similarity and identify the distinctions between them. Leadership development has being an important part of military training at all levels, as the C2 is also at the heart of military existence and operations. However, people often find it difficult to make distinctions between ML and C2 because of the obscurity that usually permeate the technical cleavages that exist between the two military concepts. This paper attempts a conceptual interrogation of ML and C2 as critical terms that are central to the military institution. It is argued herein that ML is a determinant in the success or otherwise of the mission irrespective of the authority (C2) vested on a commander. The paper concludes that C2 is an authorised power while ML is the wisdom required to exercise it for mission accomplishment.

Key Words: Military Leadership, Command and Control, Commander, Subordinates, Mission and Operating Environment.

INTRODUCTION

The primary responsibility of the armed forces is to ensure territorial integrity of a country across land, sea, and air as well as Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) when necessary. In the discharge of this constitutional duties, leadership remains a very crucial phenomenon. Exercising leadership in the military or any other profession mostly requires an authority warranting such leadership in the first place. Generally, this kind of leadership is attained through promotion and appointment which often erroneously regarded as Military Leadership (ML) or be in Command and Control (C2). Contrarily, ML is neither a rank nor career progression in the armed forces. Rather, it is an act. It is a creative activity based on character, ability, and mental power through which a commander influences, inspires and directs his subordinates to accomplish a mission. On the other hand, C2 is the authority, an appointment so to say, vested on the commander

to direct and regulate subordinates towards accomplishing a mission. As it will be discussed later in this paper, ML is an in-built phenomenon that could be enhanced by training and skills development. On the contrary, C2 is mostly rank determined. This paper consist of this brief introduction after which the theories of leadership were appraised. This was followed by a conceptual discourse where ML and C2 were thoroughly examined. Elements of ML were discussed and attention was paid to the dissection of the technicalities of C2. Penultimately, the distinctions between ML and C2 were established and a concluding remarks were made.

LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Leadership has attracted academic attention since 1930s. One of the earliest scholars in this field is Chester Barnard, who gives a classical definition that “leadership is the ability of a superior to influence the behavior of subordinates and persuade them to follow a particular course of action (Chester, 1938).” After Benard, the academic sphere was inundated with several other definitions by many scholars. For instance, John W. Gardner asserts that “leadership is the process of persuasion and example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to take action that is in accord with the leader’s purpose, or the shared purposes of all (Gardner, 1987).” For Moraski (2001) leadership is “an inspirational empowerment that flows from one person to another, and successfully accomplishes the initial goals or objectives of the first person.” To Warren Bennis (2009), “leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential.” Also, IAAP sees leadership as a major way in which people change the minds of others and move organizations forward to accomplish identified goals (IAAP, 2009). From the foregoing definitions, leadership appears to be anchored on three things i.e. the personality and actions of the superior, influencing the behaviour and trust of the subordinates, and lastly, achieving the set goals.



Scholars have theorised leadership in furtherance of understanding about the phenomenon. The eight common theories are: Great Man, Trait, Contingency, Situational, Behavioural, Participative, Management, and Relationship. Therefore, it is important to provide a brief explanation on each of the theories in line with Kendra Van Wagner's position as subsequently discussed.

Great Man Theory: Assume that the capacity for leadership is inherent – that great leaders are born, and definitely not made. These theories often portray great leaders as heroic, mythic, and destined to rise to leadership when needed. The term “Great Man” was used because, at the time, leadership was thought of primarily as a male quality, especially in terms of military leadership.

Trait Theory: Similar in some ways to *Great Man theory*, trait theory assumes that people inherit certain qualities and traits that make them better suited to leadership. Trait theory often identifies particular personality or behavioral characteristics shared by leaders.

Contingency Theory: Is focused on particular variables related to the environment that might determine which particular style of leadership is best suited for the situation. According to this theory, no leadership style is best in all situations. Success depends upon a number of variables, including the leadership style, qualities of the followers, and aspects of the situation.

Situational Theory: It proposes that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational variable. Different styles of leadership may be more appropriate for certain types of decision-making.

Behavioral Theory: Is based upon the belief that great leaders are made, and definitely not born. Rooted in behaviorism, this leadership theory focuses on the actions of leaders, not on mental qualities or internal states. According to this theory, people can *learn* to become leaders through teaching and observation.

Participatory Theory: Suggests that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account. These leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process. In participatory theory, however, the leader retains the right to allow the input of others.

Management Theory: Also known as “Transactional theory”, focus on the role of

supervision, organization, and group performance. These theory base leadership on a system of reward and punishment. Managerial theory is often used in business; when employees are successful, they are rewarded; when they fail, they are reprimanded or punished.

Relationship Theory: Also known as “Transformational theory”, focused upon the connections formed between leaders and followers. These leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members see the importance and higher good of the task. Transformational leaders are focused on the performance of group members, but also want each person to fulfill his or her potential. These leaders often have high ethical and moral standards (Kendra, 2008). It is important to note here that, to be a good leader, one needs a combination of some of these theories; as to one-fit-all among them, given the nature of human beings who could appear difficult to be led.

CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

Two concepts are very central to this paper. These are ML and C2. Therefore, it is imperative to establish an understanding on each of them before proceeding to other sections of the paper.

The Concept of Military Leadership (ML)

Military is a force authorized to use lethal or deadly force and weapons to support the interests of the state and some or all of its citizens (US Army, 1977; Leonard et al, 2003). It typically consists of an Army, Navy, Air Force, and in certain countries the Marines and Coast Guard (e.g. USA). The task of the military is usually defined as defence of the state, and its citizens, and the prosecution of war against another state. The military actually consists of a diverse collection of organizations, roles, cultures, and people. For example, the Nigerian military contains three professions: Army, Navy, and Air Force. Regardless of the general principles and organisation of the armed forces, each profession has its own culture and, hence, its own unique aspects of leadership (Leonard et al , 2003).

Military leadership is not a theory but a concept. As earlier stated, leadership is a theory with many theoretical positions to its explanation. But when merged with military, it becomes a concept. There are plethora of literature on ML by many authors. Jane M Moraski opined that ML is a combination of influencing others and accomplishing the desired goal is essential in defining leadership. A leader is a leader because he or she has followers. One thing that distinguishes the process of leading is the willingness of the followers (Moraski, 2001).



Muhammed and Anes (2013) perceived ML as a concept that includes authority, influence, responsibility and chain of command as the most important dimensions. The Australian Department of Defence defines ML as the process of influencing others in order to gain their willing consent in the ethical pursuit of missions (Australian Department of Defence, 2010). For the United States' Army, ML is the art of influencing and directing men in such a way as to obtain their willing obedience, confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation to accomplish the mission (US Army, 1965). The first definition is centered on some of the components of ML, while the second viewed it as a process. However, the position of the US Army is considered to be more broader than those stated *ab-initio*; because it addresses the personality of a leader i.e. influence on his subordinates, the military hierarchy i.e. directing his subordinates, and the objective of leadership itself i.e. mission accomplishment. However, Jörg Keller provided a sharp and compacted definition of ML which could remain a veritable reference in the discourse for a long time thus: "Military leadership is an art, a creative activity based on character, ability, and mental power (Keller, 2014)."

Keller (2014) then maintains that ML is an art and, as such, can be learned the same as any other art. In the ultimate sense, ML is not inherent; it is based upon the development of individual personality traits and upon the understanding and application of sound leadership principles and techniques. The art of military leadership can be learned, developed, and practiced in varying degrees by anyone properly motivated and possessing the mental and physical ability, and the moral integrity expected of a commissioned or noncommissioned officer. However, developing this art is a continuing process (Keller, 2014).

Leadership is a very critical aspect of the military institution because it determines the success or otherwise of a mission. This is what made General Colin Powell, the former United States' Secretary of State, to note that:

"the battalions that did best were those with the best commanders. The new technologies were adopted, and they did make a difference. But we never lost

sight of the reality that people, particularly gifted commanders, are what make units succeed..., leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible."

The thrust of Powell's argument is that, a military leader (Commander) is more important than war equipment as both the success and failure of the mission lie on his shoulder. His position is in tandem with the "Great Man" and "Trait" leadership theories which are anchored on the heroic nature and personal leadership qualities inherent in an individual. Furthermore, General Maxwell Taylor asserts that:

one expects a military leader to demonstrate in his daily performance a thorough knowledge of his own job and further an ability to train his subordinates in their duties and thereafter to supervise and evaluate their work. His competence may be further confirmed by evidence of good judgment in choosing key assistants in command and staff functions—proof that he knows a good man when he sees one.

He concludes by saying that the task of identifying subordinate qualities becomes much greater in the case of our third category, which embraces the traits of character encountered in successful leaders. Historically, those traits have generally included virtues such as reliability, courage, dedication to mission, determination, and self-discipline (Maxwell, 1977). Maxwell's argument is premised on "Transformational" leadership theory that based on the relationship that exist between a Commander and his subordinates; where the leader is keenly interested in developing his followers and earn their trust through capacity, integrity, role modeling and commitment.

Elements of Military Leadership

The elements of military leadership that must be taken into consideration at any given time are: the Leader, the Group, Communication, and the Context as subsequently discussed.



Fig. 1: Elements of Military Leadership. Source: Author's Graphical Illustration.

The Leader: A leader must have a honest understanding of who he is, what he knows, and what he can do. All good leaders have some of these qualities, none have all, and few have identical qualities. One fact, however, has emerged. Although heredity, as in all aspects of human behavior, probably does play a partial role in leadership, it is not the overriding factor. Experience, earning, and environmental factors are of considerably greater importance in leadership development than heredity (Maxwell, 1977). It is important to note that, it is the followers, not the leader who determines if a leader is successful. If they do not trust or lack confidence in their leader, then they will be uninspired. To be successful, a leader have to convince his followers, not himself or his superiors, that he is worthy of being followed (The Art & Science of Leadership, 2017).

The Group: Different people require different styles of leadership. For example, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee. A person who lacks motivation requires a different approach than one with a high degree of motivation. A leader must know his personnel. The fundamental starting point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. Above all, the leader must come to know characteristics of his personnel (US Army, 1965).

Communication: It takes a two-way communication for a leader to lead effectively. Nonverbal make a chunk of this communication. A leader must understand that his actions, reactions, and inaction speak louder than his voice. For example, when a leader “set the example,” that communicates to his followers that he would not

ask them to perform anything that he would not be willing to do. What and how a leader communicates either builds or harms the relationship between him and his followers (US Army, 1965).

The Context: The context (situation) comprises the assigned mission and environmental and other factors other than those discussed in *Leader* and *Group* above that affect its accomplishment. All are different. What you do in one situation will not always work in another. No two situations are exactly the same. Environments and missions range from the inherent confusion, urgency, and fast action of battle to the routine, recurring, and familiar nonbattle situation. Each situation must be faced as a new and separate problem with its own answer, and there must be a continuous evaluation of the situation as it changes. The various situations that confront a leader require substantial leadership adaptability; as a leader must use his judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation (US Army, 1965).

The Concept of Command and Control (C2)

Command and Control (C2) is a very crucial military concept that has attracted the attention of scholars, both military and civilian, over time. As the name implies, it is a merger of two distinct terms i.e. Command and Control. Before attempting any definition of the concept, it is imperative to understand the two terms distinctively. *Command* is the authority that a commander in the armed forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for



effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing and coordinating military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. *Control* is the regulation of forces and battlefield operating systems to accomplish the mission in accordance with the commander's intent (Robert et al, 2010).

One of the earliest definitions of C2 is that of the United States' Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms which defines C2 as "the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission..." It includes the arrangement of personnel, training, information management, doctrine, equipment, and facilities essential for the commander or other decision maker to conduct operations (Defence Technical Information Center, 2017). However, David and Richard argue that the US DoD Dictionary relies heavily on military terminology in defining C2. They opine that C2 concept uses this terminology as a starting point but not an end point. In fact, they assert that C2 must transcend military organizations and doctrine, because future operations will involve interagency, coalition, nongovernmental, and private entities. They concluded that future "commanders" will

include non uniformed men and women, and an effective future concept anticipates and calls for C2 systems that will serve them (David and Richard, 2006). This is why NATO comes up with the sense of C3 where Consultation is the first C with the belief that intent is derived from a process involving multiple parties. Thus, NATO posits that Consultation, Command, and Control (C3) are the responsibilities and activities of political, military and civil authorities in political consultation, including crisis management, nuclear consultation, and civil emergency planning. NATO then concludes that C3 could also mean "the authority, responsibilities and activities of military commanders in the direction and coordination of military forces and in the implementation of orders related to the execution of operations (NATO, 2017)."

DISSECTING THE TECHNICALITIES OF C2

Among the authors who have researched extensively on C2 are David and Richard (2006) with their work "The Future of C2". Their work stands out as a leading literature with technical dissection of command and control. Thus, a technical analysis of C2 is done here using the Conceptual Model with Value Matrices of David and Richard (2006) below.

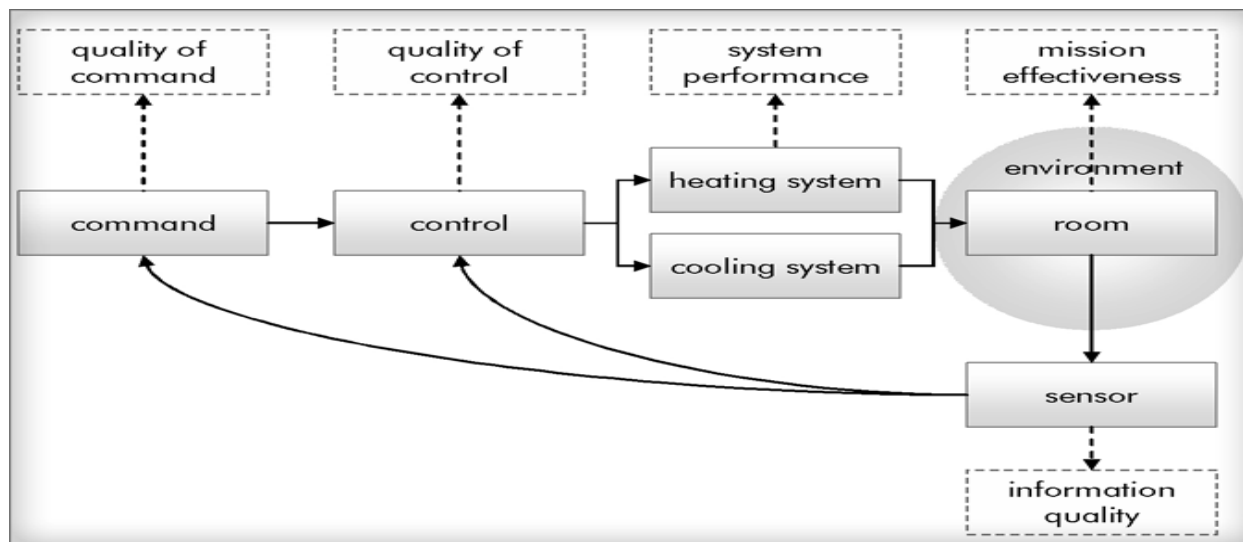


Fig 2: Conceptual Model with Value Matrices. Source: David and Richard, (2006).

In the Fig. 2 above, a Mission area is likened with a Room within an environment that includes both local and international influences. The mission here therefore is to achieve, let say a 25 degrees celsius of temperature within a room, which if attained the mission is said to be accomplished. Directly

connected to the room and the environment is the Sensor which in this case represents the Strategic decision making level i.e. where national assets and power can be employed. Emanating from the sensor is the Command which represents the Operational level of decision making with the



authority to plan and execute the mission via controlled activities. Control here means the Tactical level where mission actions are been regulated. Consequently, the Heating and Cooling Systems are the mission activities that are been regulated at the tactical level. Thus, the appropriateness of the control will determine whether the mission would be considered accomplished or not. However, the perforated variables in the Fig. 2 above are the determinants and end-product(s) of the entire mission. Therefore, the quality of intelligence available to the Strategic level would surely determine the type, quantity and quality of the national assets and power that will be employed for the mission. Further, the quality of Command will definitely inform the quality of Control thereby regulating the mission activities (performance) accordingly to arrive at the accomplishment (affectiveness) or otherwise of the mission.

DISSECTING THE CLEAVAGES BETWEEN ML AND C2

Oftentimes, people ask questions about the similarities and the distinctions between ML and C2. The two are different but related concepts in the military parlance. While ML is centers on the act of influencing and directing men in such a way as to obtain their willing obedience, confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation to accomplish the mission; C2 on the other hand connotes the exercise of authority, responsibilities and activities of military commanders in the direction and coordination of military forces and in the implementation of orders related to the execution of operations.

From the foregoing, it could be clearly understood that ML is about influencing subordinates to winning their hearts and minds through the integrity, personality and actions of the leader toward accomplishing a mission; and C2 is the exercise of authority to manage subordinates to implement orders related to execution of operation. The distinction here is that, the end state of ML is accomplishment while that of C2 is execution. As David and Richard argue, C2 may be necessary, it is not sufficient to guarantee mission success. That is because the success of a mission is dependent on a great many other factors, including the availability of appropriate means and the capabilities and behaviors of adversaries and others (David and Richard, 2006). Consequently, a C2 Commander needs much more than the authority assigned him by the system to deliver; and this is where ML becomes imperative. Because, mere exercise of authority may not guarantee success of

the operation, but a commander with high integrity who is been trusted by his subordinates has higher opportunity of accomplishment.

Looking at the dichotomy from instrumentalist point of view, C2 as an authority issued the commander, is a platform for him to demonstration his military leadership prowess and not leadership on it own. C2 is nothing but an authority that challenges the leadership potential of the commander. Therefore, C2 is an instrument for ML demonstration. Also, the distinction between the two concepts could be established by identifying ML as a personal phenomenon and C2 as institutional one. Leadership is acquired through personal traits and training over time through which an officer can be equipped with the act of influencing and directing his subordinates by winning their trust and confidence; while C2 is an institutional instrument that is hierarchically allocated by a military organisation and assigned a Commander to manage his subordinates and resources in executing an operation.

The distinctions of ML and C2 could further be seen through the architecture of military system. The military institution is organised in such a manner that an officer, based on his rank, requires the authority inherent in C2 to exhibit his act of ML. It is important to clarify that C2 only assigns authority based on hierarchy but does not make a leader. For instance, a junior officer could possess more leadership qualities than his superior who is above him and authorised in the context of C2. This is what informed Geoffrey Regan to argue in his book "Narren, Nulpen, Niedermacher" (Original title: "Military Blunders"), where he describes the mishaps of incompetent military commanders thus:

There are just as many incompetent physicians, dentists, accountants, lawyers, teachers and engineers as there are incapable military commanders. For its potential impact of military failure on the society often has much more serious consequences. In civil aviation, a pilot might cause the death of several hundreds of people, while the decision of a general might kill tens of thousands of people (Regan, 1989).

Therefore, seniority does not translate to leadership even though a senior officer is expected to exhibit more act of influencing and directing than his subordinates. In the words of Jane Moraski,



“People with authority... can force people to do things they do not want to do, but this is not leadership. Leaders inspire, challenge, enable, empower and encourage others to want to follow them to accomplish their shared missions or goals (Moraski, 2001).” Finally, C2 is operation specific while ML spans the entire career and/or life time of an officer.

CONCLUSION

The military profession is premised on leadership in the protection of territorial integrity of and ISOps in a country. Therefore, this paper synthesized various definitions offered by many authors and posited that Military Leadership is an art, a creative activity based on character, ability, and mental power through which a commander influences, inspires and directs his subordinates to

accomplish a mission. Furthermore, it is maintained that there is a clear distinction between ML and C2; given that ML is an act of influencing, inspiring, and directing, while C2 is the exercise of authority to direct and manage. Even though a commander requires ML to be successful in C2, the later does not make a leader rather a commander. Consequently, ML is very essential for all officers and men because, as Gen Maxwell Taylor asserted, men will only be willing and ready to go into a danger zone with a transformational leader and a great commander with integrity who has build a robust relationship with them. Once such bonds of mutual respect and confidence unite a leader and his men, they become a mighty force capable of the deeds of such famous fighting units as Caesar's Tenth Legion, Napoléon's Old Guard, and Jackson's Stonewall Brigade (Maxwell, 1977).

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